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### **Letter of support from the Committee on the Rights of the Child**

Every child has a right to freedom from violence. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child urges governments to make the protection of children from all forms of violence a high priority goal on the post-2015 agenda, as an issue of utmost international as well as national importance.

The extent and intensity of violence exerted on children is alarming, with a wide range of harmful consequences. Children experience violence in the family, in care institutions, in schools, in the justice system, in the community, in the media. Children in vulnerable situations are particularly at risk, including children with disabilities, deprived of a family, from socially disadvantaged families, in street situations or in migration. Both girls and boys are exposed, though differently. The fulfilment of children's rights in all respects – to survival, health, development, education, participation, non-discrimination – are threatened by violence.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child gives the child the right to be protected from all forms of violence. Violence in its wide sense includes all forms of physical, emotional or mental violence, injury, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, as stated by article 19 of the Convention. All forms of violence against children, however mild, are unacceptable; the Convention does not leave room for any level of legalized violence against children.

A rights-based approach to the protection of children is necessary for respecting and promoting the human dignity, physical and psychological integrity of children as rights-bearing individuals rather than perceiving them primarily as “victims”. The concept of dignity requires that every child is recognized, respected and protected as a rights holder and as a unique and valuable human being.

All violence against children is preventable. States have the responsibility to prevent and stop violence wherever it occurs, whatever form it takes, and whether exercised in the private sphere by adults or other children, or by public officials. Measures to end violence must be massively strengthened and expanded in order to effectively put an end to these practices. There is an urgent need to understand and address the root causes of violence and to apply an integrated and comprehensive child protection approach, including social protection programmes and awareness-raising campaigns, and adequate resources must be provided for these purposes. Cases of violence must be investigated and perpetrators sanctioned. States should be held accountable for what they are doing or not doing to protect all children from violence, through the use of targets and indicators.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child strongly supports placing children's right to freedom from all forms of violence high on the post-2015 development agenda.

